

AMERICA'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP
DURING COVID-19

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, our best efforts to fight this virus at home cannot succeed if we are not also fighting it abroad.

The United States has led the world out of every major modern crisis, and that leadership now is critical to our ability to successfully rebound from the economic impact of COVID-19. We will not be able to fully restore economic stability in our country until the spread of the virus is under control globally.

In Congress, it's our imperative to act quickly for the American people. That certainly means protecting our courageous first responders, strengthening our health systems at home, and taking steps to safeguard American jobs and livelihoods. But it also means doing our part to eliminate threats before they reach our borders.

Right now, the majority of the world, especially developing nations, lack the resources to prevent or respond to a public health crisis like COVID-19. They suffer from weak health as well as large percentages of displaced and refugee populations, where social distancing is near impossible.

According to the CDC, 70 percent of the world is underprepared for a public health emergency. Robust U.S. funding for global health programs can help combat the continued spread of COVID-19. The United States must restore cuts to humanitarian funds, particularly in areas like water, sanitation, and hygiene, and increase funding for international organizations doing emergency response work.

The United States has the scientific and technical expertise to assist others with their pandemic responses. The CDC is experienced in helping other countries meet international health standards for global health security. We must lead the international community in the global public health response, while also asserting leadership to coordinate a global economic recovery.

If we do not recognize that challenges abroad are linked to challenges at home, we will not be able to fully overcome the impact of this virus. If we leave the world vulnerable to coronavirus, we leave our own country vulnerable as well.

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HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congressman BERA and Congressman YOHIO, two of my colleagues on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, for hosting this virtual special order today on the importance of strong U.S. global leadership with regard to the coronavirus.

The coronavirus is reminding us that diseases and their impacts know no borders, making it critical that the United States show

leadership during the pandemic, and also afterwards to get the global economy back on track as well as prepare for the next outbreak. There is no reason to assume there will not be future outbreaks, and, as the world becomes more interconnected, we need to be prepared so that the next outbreak does not become a pandemic like the coronavirus.

This is where the Global Health Security Act, legislation that my friend GERRY CONNOLLY and I authored, can make an impact. And I want to thank him for his leadership in moving this legislation forward.

The Global Health Security Act would help the Federal Government prepare for the next pandemic both by codifying critical aspects of the interagency coordination process for global health security and also put the Congressional stamp of approval on the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSa).

The GHSa is an oddly-named multilateral initiative which seeks to strengthen health systems around the world. It focuses on public health issues of top international concern such as biosafety and biosecurity, immunization, health monitoring, zoonotic diseases, and healthcare worker training. Many of these priority areas are critical to fighting not only the coronavirus but also any infectious disease that emerges after we have contained the current outbreak.

The Obama Administration helped set up the GHSa in the face of sluggish implementation of international guidelines for health systems around the world and poor international leadership in response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014. The Trump Administration has enthusiastically carried on U.S. leadership through the GHSa, pledging substantial U.S. funding toward its implementation. The GHSa is something which both parties can be proud of.

Americans are rightly skeptical of the efficacy of multilateral organizations. Since an illness is one short plane ride away, however, investments in disease detection and public health capacity in other countries directly support our own health security right here in America. If we don't address and prepare for diseases abroad, we will have to address them at home.

That is why I am proud that the Global Health Security Act passed the Foreign Affairs Committee in February with unanimous support. By passing this legislation Congress will demonstrate a strong commitment to global health security leadership.

For better or worse, the United States does not have a choice on whether we step up and lead on the coronavirus and future pandemics. As we have seen, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has covered up, and still is covering up, critical information about the early stages of the disease and its origins. This allowed the virus to become a global pandemic. In China, everyone's health and wellbeing are subservient to the political goals of the CCP. We must ensure that the CCP does not take global health leadership. If it does, it will not just be the people of China whose health is subject to the political calculus of an authoritarian political system, it will be all people around the world, including here in America.

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HON. GILBERT RAY CISNEROS, JR.

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

Mr. CISNEROS. Madam Speaker, for the better part of the last century, U.S. leadership has been essential to addressing critical global challenges. From rebuilding Europe after World War II to building an international coalition to respond to the Ebola Outbreak, the United States is unique in the world in its ability to build international coalitions and marshal resources and support around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis that necessarily requires a global response in order to solve it—and the United States must take up the leadership role it has fulfilled for decades to facilitate the response.

COVID-19 knows no borders—quickly spreading across the world in a matter of months, accelerated by our inter-connected world. As such, while we should extend every effort to arrest the spread in the United States, stopping the spread in the United States alone is not enough. If we are to truly be able to reopen our economy and engage in global trade and participate in the global supply chain, we risk greater exposure and transmission of the virus if it continues to spread unchecked around the world.

Fortunately, the United States possesses not only the requisite knowledge and expertise in its public health and medical officials, but also decades of experience in global health efforts necessary to lead a coordinated global response. The United States has done this before. Through the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States has led efforts to combat the spread of HIV, malaria, Ebola, and other infectious diseases. Doing so not only made the epicenters of those outbreaks safer, but it also made the United States and American citizens safer. As a result, we contributed to an environment that enabled the American and global economies to thrive. Today, amid the worst global pandemic in at least a century, the United States must step back into the leadership role it has held for decades and work with the international community to chart a pathway to defeat COVID-19.

We must commit the resources necessary across our global health, humanitarian, and economic toolkits to defeat the coronavirus. According to the CDC, 70 percent of the world remains underprepared to prevent, detect, and respond to a public health emergency. That means we must ensure our diplomats and development professionals on the frontlines receive the support they need to maintain operations, provide for emergency preparedness needs, and protect Americans. After committing trillions to relief at home and more than \$2 billion in emergency funding to support the global COVID-19 response, it is understandable that some may be reticent to spend more on the international effort. However, as the data suggests that an outbreak in a remote village can spread to major cities on all six continents in less than 36 hours, that funding is an investment in a safer and more prosperous America.

I thank the Frontline healthcare workers, first responders, military servicemembers, and